

# Lambda Letters Project

Vol. 6, No. 2

February, 1998

www.humboldt1.com/~mamurphy/lambdaletters

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(916) 965-6851

### Help Needed in a Tough Battle and Cultural Exchange

Lavender Library, Archives Sacramento, CA

For several months, representatives of Lambda Letters and LIFE Lobby have sought to persuade one or more legislators to introduce a bill to provide penalties for hate crimes against transgendered people and to require police departments to report the numbers of such crimes to the state attorney general. It has not been finalized yet, but we are hopeful that such a bill will soon be introduced. If so, we will need your help in getting letters to legislators from the residents of certain key legislative districts.

If the bill is introduced, it would first be heard and voted on in the Assembly Public Safety Committee. probably in March. It would have to be approved by that committee to remain alive. Table 1 on page 6 lists the committee members (column 1). It also shows the scores they received from Lambda Letters in 1997 for their votes on Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (l/g/b/t) issues (column 2), and indicates the number of Lambda Letters' members who live in their districts.

If the bill is introduced, we will need to persuade five members of the Public Safety Committee to vote for it. One of the most effective ways of doing that is to flood them with mail from the residents of their legisla-

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### Welfare Reform Contributes to Hunger

The first signs of possible harm from the welfare reform bills passed last year are beginning to appear. The Associated Press reported that the number of people without adequate food is on the rise.

Congress' revision of the nation's welfare laws cut billions of dollars from the food stamp program, which is designed to keep people from going hungry. The welfare law revisions reduced the value of food stamps, limited their availability to three months for childless, able-bodied adults, and denied food stamps to most legal immigrants.

Now that the funding cuts have taken effect, there is growing evidence of a large increase in the number of people who can't get enough to eat without help. Leaders of many charity programs believe that the cut in funding for food stamps are at least partly to blame for this increase.

 $Recently, the U.S. \, Conference of \, Mayors \, released$ a survey reporting requests for emergency food increased an average of 16 percent in 1997. This was the largest jump in requests for food assistance since 1992. The data in the report was drawn from a survey of 29 cities across the nation. The rise in requests for assis-

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DefeatingErosion of Abortion Rights
Become Our People of Color Analyst 6
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### Lambda Letters Progress Report

#### Letters Collected

November, 1997 2,687 letters In all of 1997 47,264 letters Dollars Spent

November 1997 \$1,247 In all of 1997 \$16,409

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

### Lambda Letters Project

#### Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstreamof Americansociety now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization.

#### Confidentiality

The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly except in December by the Lambda Letters Project Inc.,
6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.
Postmaster: send address changes to the address above.

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Standards Enforcement district offices. Bakersfield (805-395-2710) Eureka\* (415-557-7878) Fresno (209-248-8400) Long Beach (310-590-5044) Los Angeles (213-897-4037) Marysville (916-741-4061) Oakland\* (415-557-7878) Redding\* (415-557-7878) Sacramento (916-323-4920) Salinas\* (415-557-7878) San Bernardino (909-383-4333) San Diego (619-637-5500) San Francisco\* (415-557-7878) San Jose\* (415-557-7878) Santa Ana (714-558-4111) Santa Barbara (805-963-1438) Santa Rosa (707-576-2363) Stockton (209-948-7770) Van Nuys (818-901-5312) Ventura (805-654-4538)

\*These cities share an office.

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## Please Oppose Affirmative Inaction

by Boyce Hinman

Representative Charles Canady (R-FL) has introduced H.R. 1909, which, in effect, would end affirmative action programs in the federal government's employment, contracting and other programs. This bill must be stopped. Please write to your member of the House of Representatives urging that he or she oppose H.R. 1909.

You may ask, why is affirmative action necessary? The fundamental reason is that women and minorities have been, and still are, shut out of the best and highest paying jobs in this country. Table 3 below illustrates the point with data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau

The median annual income for women in 1996 was over \$9,000 less than that of males. Can you explain that difference? Remember, the data covers only year-round, full-time workers, so the difference wasn't the result of women working only part time.

Do you really think women want to earn less? If you are a woman, do you really believe that women are able to get any job for which they are qualified? If you are a man, ask that question of several of your women

Continued on page 8

### Table 3. Median Income of Year-Round, Full-Time Workers, 1996

Sex	Median Income*		
Male	\$32,426		
Female	\$23,161		
Race	Median Income**		
White (non-Hispanic)	\$18,844		
African-American	\$11,306		
Hispanic	\$9,575		

\*Median means the exact middle. For example, the first table indicates that half the male workers earned above \$32,426 per year and half earned below it.

\*\*This table includes all workers, not just full-time, year-round workers.

### Restoring Medical Benefits for PWAs at Work

by Eva Lujan

Many people living with HIV/AIDS are benefiting from the new drug therapies, such as protease inhibitors—even to the point of being able to return to work. Unfortunately, people with AIDS (PWA) find that they lose access to health care and treatment due to probationary periods in which the employer does not provide health insurance and in which Medi-Cal benefits may be limited or nonexistent.

According to AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA), almost 50 percent of PWAs rely on Medi-Cal to pay for medical care and the fear of losing access to health care prevents individuals from going to work.

Assemblymember Carole Migden (D-San Francisco) is intent on resolving this problem. She has authored A.B. 20, an amendment to the Welfare and Institutions Code, which would ensure access to health care when a PWA is unable to receive private coverage, and when such disruption in treatment would deteriorate the individual's health and result in drug resistance.

Existing law establishes the Medi-Cal program to provide comprehensive health care services to eligible low-income and disabled individuals. Under existing law, individuals returning to the work force lose their disability benefits and face high share-of-cost benefits under Medi-Cal. For example, if an

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## Support the Hate Crimes Prevention Act

by Hilary Cook

At the beginning of January, Attorney General Janet Reno called for Congress to extend existing Federal hate crime legislation to include crimes committed because of the real or perceived gender, sexual orientation, or disability of the victim. Reno's support followed on the November White House Conference on Hate Crimes, during which President Clinton endorsed S.B. 1529, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1998, introduced by Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Arlen Specter (R-PA), which would do just that.

The FBI's annual report, "Hate Crime Statistics 1996," found that 12 percent of reported hate crimes were based on sexual orientation, with 757 attacks on gay men and 150 on lesbians. It is widely thought that these hate crimes are generally under-reported. Many victims are hesitant to tell the police that the motive for the attack was their real or perceived sexual orientation. Local law enforcement agencies are often reluctant to report crimes based on sexual orientation. Alabama, for example, reported that there were no homophobic assaults in the state in 1996. San Francisco, on the other hand, found that 35 percent of all reported hate crimes were based on sexual orientation.

Currently, most hate crimes are prosecuted at the state level. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia include sexual orientation in their state hate crimes laws. Nine states have no hate crime laws, and nineteen others have hate crime laws that do not include sexual orientation.

Identical bills from the House and Senate now sit before their respective judiciary committees awaiting approval. These bills would add real or perceived sexual orientation, gender, and disability to existing federal hate crime statutes. Please sign your letter urging committee members to help them become law.

Lavender Robyn Caruso & Karen Guckert
Valentines \$\&\times 4 \text{ years } \&\times \]

Let us know when your anniversary occurs!

## Defeat Erosion of Abortion Rights

by Carla Leek

Senate Constitutional Amendment 17, introduced by Tim Leslie (R-Tahoe City) and Rob Hurtt (R-Orange County), would restrict access to safe, legal abortion. If the bill passes, a measure would be placed on the November 3rd ballot, giving Californians a chance to decide the matter through their votes.

This proposed amendment is yet another attempt by conservative politicians to restrict and reduce rights granted twenty-five years ago through the Supreme Court's Roe v Wade decision.

The heart of the bill reads: "This measure would prohibitan abortion from being performed upon an unemancipated minor unless the physician performing the abortion has first obtained the informed written consent of the minor to the abortion and also has obtained the written consent of one of her parents or legal guardian."

The assumption behind the proposed amendment is that a female (a minor female, in this case) is not capable of making decisions about her own body. Thus, an adult must be called upon to make the decision for her. Teenage pregnancy is a tragedy, no matter how you look at it. One key to stopping teen pregnancy is to allow minors to take responsibility for their actions. To take responsibility, they must be given accurate information to help them make informed decisions, and they must have the right to act on decisions about their own bodies.

Please join Lambda Letters in urging the California Senate to defeat S.C.A. 17.



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### Help Needed in Tough Battle

Continued from page 1

Table 1. Assembly Public Safety
Committee Members

Name	Score	# Members
Larry Bowler	0	51
Jan Goldsmith	0	5
Robert Hertzberg	83	2
George House	0	24
Kevin Murray	100	2
Grace Napolitano	100	0
Don Perata	100	12
Carl Washington	0	0

tive districts. However, Lambda Letters has the most members in the districts of those committee members who are least likely to vote for the bill under any circumstances. And the bill would be on a cutting-edge issue. It would take a lot to persuade even those legislators with good voting records to muster enough courage to vote for the bill. Thus, we need to assure that even the good legislators get plenty of mail from their constituents.

Please help us find supportive individuals and groups who live within the districts of the legislators on the Assembly Public Safety Committee, particularly the districts where we currently have few or no Lambda Letters members. We need to have a list of groups and individuals ready to sign letters by the beginning of March.

Table 2 at the top right lists the cities represented by each of the legislators. If you have friends from those cities, or contacts with groups from those cities (such as an MCC, a PFLAG chapter, etc.), please put them in touch with us as soon as possible. You or they may contact us at (916) 965-6851 or send us an e-mail at LambdaLP@aol.com. As an alternative, you can enclose a note with your returned letters.

Please give this important bill the maximum possible push through the Assembly Public Safety Committee by helping us find supportive people and groups in these cities.

-Information provided by Capitol Enquiries of Sacramento

### Table 2. Legislators and the Cities They Represent

### Assembly District 10, Larry Bowler

Acampo, Carmichael, Clements, Elk Grove, Galt, Herald, Linden, Lockeford, Lodi, Mather AFB, Rancho Cordova, Sacramento, Sloughhouse, Stockton, Thomton, Wilton, Woodbridge

#### Assembly District 16, Don Perata

Alameda, Emeryville, Mills College, Oakland, Piedmont

### Assembly District 25, George House

Ahwahnee, Bass Lake, Big Oak Flat, Catheys Valley, Chinese Camp, Chowchilla, Coarsegold, Columbia, Coulterville, Denair, El Portal, Fresno, Friant, Groveland, Hickman, Hornitos, Hughson, Jamestown, La Grange, Long Barn, Madera, Mariposa, Mi Wuk Village, Midpines, Moccasin, Modesto, North Fork, Oneals, Oakdale, Oakhurst, Pinecrest, Raymond, Riverbank, Sonora, Soulsbyville, Strawberry, Tuolumne, Turlock, Twain Harte, Waterford, Wishon, Yosemite National Park

### Assembly District 40, Robert Hertzberg

Canoga Park, Encino, North Hollywood, Northridge, Panorama City, Reseda, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, Valley Village, Van Nuys, Winnetka

#### Assembly District 47, Kevin Murray

Culver City, Inglewood, Los Angeles, Marina Del Rey

### Assembly District 52, Carl Washington

Compton, Gardena, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Lynwood, Paramount

#### Assembly District 58, Grace Napolitano

Cerritos, El Monte, Los Angeles, Montebello, Norwalk, Pico Rivera, Rosemead, Santa Fe Springs, Whittier

#### Assembly District 75, Jan Goldsmith

Alpine, Borrego Springs, Boulevard, Campo, Del Mar, Descanso, Dulzura, El Cajon, Escondido, Guatay, Jacumba, Jamul, Julian, La Mesa, Lakeside, Pine Valley, Potrero, Poway, Ramona, Rancho Santa Fe, San Diego, Santee, Spring Valley



### Welfare Reform

Continued from page 1

tance occurred in spite of the continuing good economy and the lowest rate of unemployment in years. The report went on to say that 19 percent of those seeking help were turned away because of the limited resources of our nation's charities.

Forty-four percent of the cities surveyed said that cuts in the food stamp program were at least partly to blame for the problem. Other, and perhaps larger, contributing factors cited in the survey included unemploymentandlow-paying jobs. May jobs for which those on food stamps qualify do not pay enough to feed them and their families adequately.

It may be necessary to consider revisiting welfare reform to assure that innocent people do not go hungry.

### Become an Advocate!

Become our people of color advocate and help us choose one subject a month (usually a piece of legislation) that is of concern to the people of color community. You'll spend only about 10-12 hours a month researching possible subjects and composing letters and articles. Do you have Internet access? Lambda Letters can provide leads on sources of information and advice on composing letters and articles. This exciting position enables you to have a direct impact on legislation that affects our daily lives.

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### Restoring Medical Benefits for PWAs

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individual takes a job paying \$2,000 per month (\$24,000 per year), the Medi-Cal share-of-cost would be \$957 per month. Taxes would be another \$500 per month, leaving \$543 per month for living expenses. Thus, if the new employment doesn't provide full medical insurance coverage, including preexisting conditions, that person will be financially worse off than if he or she simply remains on disability and Medi-Cal.

A.B. 20 would provide that any earnings up to \$2,500 per month of an individual who is receiving treatment for the symptoms of HIV or AIDS and who returns to work shall not count toward the individual's Medi-Cal share-of-cost requirement until the person is eligible for and receives full medical insurance coverage, for a period of six months.

Assembly member Migden believes this bill is costbeneficial to the state because it enables disabled individuals to leave state-funded programs linked to Medi-Cal, such as State Supplemental Payments and Social Security Income (SSP/SSI), and reenter the work force. Additionally, says Migden, this reduces the costs of state benefits and allows productive workers to contribute to the tax base.



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### Democrats to Welcome Do Ask and Do Tell! Gays and Lesbians

Recently the Democratic National Committee (DNC) Rules and Bylaws Committee and the DNC Executive Committee unanimously approved new rules for the National Democratic Convention in the year 2000. The new rules specifically require state parties to include gay and lesbian representation as part of the delegate selection process for the 2000 convention.

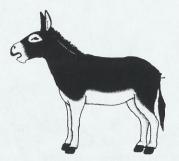
Jean O'Leary, Chair of the DNC Gay and Lesbian American Caucus and member of the DNC Executive Committee, said "These new rules will likely increase the number of openly gay and lesbian delegates to the 2000 convention and mark the first time that a major national party organization has included gays and lesbians as a priority in selecting delegates to a national party convention."

The new rules require state parties to develop and submit to the DNC—outreach plans for delegate selection that include those "historically under-represented" in the Democratic Party because of "race/ ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability." The new rules also require state parties to give "priority of consideration" to these under-represented groups in a state's delegate selection process "in order to assist in the achievement of full participation by these groups."

Those of you who are Democrats may want to consider becoming delegates in order to assure the party

keeps its promise to the community.

Theinformationforthis article was provided to us by William E. Woods of the Hawaii Equal Rights Marriage Project. You can reach him directly on the Internetat Hawaii Gay 1@aol.com, or read more about the group on the World Wide Web at www.xq.com/hermp.



The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) is asking your help in pursuing military recruiters that are violating the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" military policy. The SLDN has learned that some military recruiters are still using an old version of form DD 1966 in the recruitment process. Old versions of the form ask the sexual orientation of the recruit.

The SLDN asks your help in the following ways:

- 1. E-mail Chris Damiano at sldn@sldn.org or call him at (202) 328-3244 to ensure that you are not duplicating someone else's effort.
- 2. Go to or call your local recruiting station (Air Force, Army, Navy Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). Ask for a blank copy of form DD 1966. There is no need to provide an explanation for why you are requesting the document. If the recruiter refuses to provide a copy, remind him or her that it is not a confidential document and can be released to the public.
- 3. Mail or fax the document to Chris Damiano at the SLDN. The address and fax number are:

**SLDN** PO Box 65301 Washington, DC 20035-5301 Fax: (202) 797-1635

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### Opposing Affirmative Inaction Continued from page 3

friends. What answers do you get? I believe the only rational explanation of the difference in income by gender, is that women do not have access to all jobs for which they are qualified. The glass ceiling is real, and it keeps women from getting the best paying jobs.

Similarly, the median income of African Americans in 1996 was over \$7,500 less than for white workers and Hispanic workers' median income was almost \$9,300 less than that of white workers. Ask yourself the same questions about the desire of people of color for more pay and for access to the best paying jobs.

Some people say fewer women and minorities have the training and education needed to obtain the highest paying jobs and that is the reason for the income differential. That's probably true; but now that affirmative action is being abandoned by our public colleges and universities, it is liable to get worse.

For example, the University of California eliminated affirmative action in the enrollment process of its graduate schools effective with the students enrolling for the first time in 1997. However, the change in policy was approved by the U.C. Regents two years earlier. Data supplied by the university shows that enrollment of African Americans in its graduate schools has declined by 12 percent since 1995 and Hispanic enrollment has declined by a little over 2 percent in the same period. The debate over affirmative action, and the abandonment of that policy, has made the University of California a less welcoming place for people of color, so fewer apply for admission.

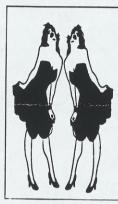
In summary, women and people of color still face barriers to employment and to the education needed to obtain the best jobs. Affirmative action is still needed to overcome those barriers. H.R. 1909 is affirmative inaction in the face of real inequity. It should be opposed.



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